

## For Those With Concerns About Identity Theft

If the results of a CCH search lead you to believe that someone is either knowingly, or unknowingly, using your name and date of birth for the purpose of criminal identity theft, notify the receptionist at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension office at which the query was run.

You may also contact the bureau's main office, located at 1430 Maryland Ave. E. in St. Paul, in person or by calling 651-793-2400.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension will provide you with an information sheet describing steps you can take to address the situation.

## How to Clear Up Confusion About Criminal Records

For CCH Public Terminal Users:

If you believe the name and birth date of a search subject are being used by another individual, please refer them to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

You may also ask the subject to complete an informed consent form, which when accompanied by the subject's fingerprints, will allow the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to release information verifying or disproving the existence of a criminal record associated with this individual.

To view a sample informed consent form, visit the bureau's home page on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Web site: <http://bca.dps.mn.gov>. From the Public Services menu select Criminal History then Public and Private Data. Click on the "Informed Consent Form" link.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Communications at 651-793-7575.

**Public  
Computerized  
Criminal  
History:  
Read It Correctly,  
Use It Carefully**



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## Computerized Criminal History Data

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension creates, collects, and maintains computerized criminal history (CCH) data that identifies individuals convicted of misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, and felonies reported by Minnesota law enforcement agencies. Some of this data, including the offenses for which individuals were convicted, is available to the public for 15 years following completion of the sentences imposed for those offenses.

Minnesota Statute 13.87 requires the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to provide the public with access to this data, at no charge, through a computer monitor located at the bureau's central office. Printouts of CCH data are available for a fee.

Public data does not include criminal records for juveniles, arrest information, or any out-of-state or federal criminal information.

## CCH Data: Read it Correctly, Use it Carefully

Conducting a search on a CCH public display terminal is a possible first step in determining whether someone has been convicted of a crime in the past 15 years.

When CCH data is interpreted correctly, it can be useful to prospective employers, landlords, and other people conducting research for business or personal reasons. But, if this information is misinterpreted — or not verified through use of fingerprints — the user could make incorrect assumptions about the subject of the search.

For this reason, it is important to use caution in making employment, housing, and other decisions based upon CCH data.

## What Does “No Record” Mean?

The CCH system will search for an exact match of the information the user enters. Sometimes the user will receive a “no record” response to a search.

A “no record” response could mean a number of things. One possibility is that the subject does not have a criminal record.

Other possibilities include the following:

- The subject's record is not public data.
- The subject's name was entered incorrectly.
- A nickname was entered, rather than the name associated with the record.
- Criminal data about the subject was not sent to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.
- The subject's record is under a former name, such as a maiden name.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension may not have access to all criminal history information maintained by local police departments, courts, and federal agencies, such as the FBI.

It is also important to note that criminal data is subject to change; therefore, the outcome of CCH searches may vary over time.

Refer to the brochure, “Accessing and Reading Criminal History Records,” for additional information about reading criminal history responses.

## What's in a Name?

If you believe you have located the subject of your search in the database, consider some additional possibilities, including the following:

- Two or more people can have the same name and birth date.
- Criminal offenders frequently use aliases, including the names of other individuals.

When a search of the CCH terminal generates a “match,” use caution in evaluating this data. One cannot assume that the subject of a search is the individual whose criminal history appears on the screen; this may or may not be the case. The subject of your search could have the same name and birth date as another individual, or he or she could be a victim of criminal identity theft. The only way to confirm that an individual is associated with a criminal record is through fingerprint verification.

## “It's Not Me:” Why an Individual Can Appear to Have a Record

People's names can become associated with criminal histories when, in fact, they have done nothing wrong. As the previous section explained, these situations can occur when two or more individuals have the same name and date of birth or as a result of criminal identity theft.

Some examples of criminal identity theft:

- An individual gives another person's name and personal data, such as date of birth, to a law enforcement officer during an investigation, or upon arrest and booking. In many cases, the false identity information is that of a relative or acquaintance.
- An individual shows a law enforcement officer a driver's license belonging to another person and claims he or she is that person.